

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 065708

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TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCEUR

S E C R E T STATE 065708

EXDIS, FOR AMBASSADORS PORTER AND PICKERING FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, SA, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: JORDAN'S AIR DEFENSE PROBLEM

REFS: (A) AMMAN 1223; (B) AMMAN 1225; (C) JIDDA 1697;
(C) JIDDA 1797; (E) STATE 54657

1. THIS MESSAGE OUTLINES A STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH THE SAUDIS AND JORDANIANS TO SECURE A COMPROMISE AIR DEFENSE ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD SATISFY A MAXIMUM OF JORDAN'S MILITARY REQUIREMENTS WHILE GETTING COSTS DOWN TO A LEVEL WHICH, ALTHOUGH HIGHER THAN DOLS 300 MILLION, THE SAUDIS MIGHT CONSIDER FINANCING.

2. WE HAVE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT VIEWS IN REFTELS AS WELL AS TENOR OF TECHNICAL QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO US BY CINC BIN SHAKIR AND RJAF COMMANDER ABOUD AT LAST WEEK'S U.S.-
SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 065708

JORDANIAN JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION MEETINGS. BOTH GENERALS GAVE IMPRESSION THAT 14 HAWK BATTERIES AND 100 VULCANS CONSTITUTE VIRTUALLY SACRED FIGURES FOR HUSSEIN. NEVERTHELESS, ABOUD IN PARTICULAR IS CLEARLY SEEKING WAYS IN WHICH OTHER

ELEMENTS OF THE TOTAL PACKAGE (PARTICULARLY THOSE NOT STRICTLY ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN OR OTHERWISE SUPPORT THE BASIC HAWK/VULCAN SYSTEM INITIALLY) CAN BE ELIMINATED OR DEFERRED IN ORDER TO SAVE MONEY. ALSO, THE TWO MEN HAVE

INDICATED THAT JORDANIANS ARE CONSIDERING SPECIAL FUND-RAISING MEASURES -- ADDITIONAL TAXES, FOR EXAMPLE.

3. WE MEANWHILE HAVE BEEN REVIEWING WHETHER U.S. COULD MAKE USE OF MAP GRANT OR FMS CREDIT, POSSIBLY EMPLOYING SAUDI OR OTHER EXTERNAL GUARANTEES OF CREDIT AS SUGGESTED BY AMBASSADOR PICKERING. WE ARE, HOWEVER, ON RECORD WITH THE CONGRESS THAT THE HAWK SALE WOULD BE AN FMS TRANSACTION WITH NO RPT NO U.S. FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION. TO CHANGE THAT POSITION, EVEN SLIGHTLY, WOULD INCUR THE RISK OF RE-OPENING THE WHOLE SALE TRANSACTION TO PUBLIC DEBATE AT AN UNINVITING TIME.

4. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE POSITION WE WILL WANT TO PROJECT TO THE JORDANIANS AND SAUDIS ARE:

-- (A) JORDANIAN ACQUISITION OF THE TOTAL AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AS ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED WILL HAVE TO BE BROKEN DOWN INTO TWO STAGES, WITH THE SECOND STAGE TO BE NEGOTIATED AND CARRIED OUT AFTER SUPPLEMENTARY FINANCING HAS BEEN WORKED OUT SATISFACTORILY, USING WHATEVER MIX OF INTERNAL JORDANIAN RESOURCES AND EXTERNAL FINANCING FROM SAUDI AND OTHER POTENTIAL DONORS MAY BE DEVELOPED.

-- (B) IN ACCORD WITH OUR COMMITMENT TO CONGRESS, WE WOULD NOT INVOLVE OURSELVES FINANCIALLY IN THE FIRST STAGE, BUT WILL CONSIDER -- IN CONSULTATION WITH CONGRESS-- USING GUARANTEED FMS CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS IN THE SECOND STAGE. JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WILL HAVE TO FINANCE FIRST STAGE.

-- (C) THE FIRST-STAGE PACKAGE WOULD OMIT CERTAIN BASIC
SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 065708

COMMAND AND CONTROL EQUIPMENT; CERTAIN LOGISTICAL SUPPORT ITEMS AND FACILITIES; DESIRABLE BUT MARGINAL DEPOT, MAINTENANCE AND FIRING-RANGE ARRANGEMENTS IN JORDAN; ALL BUT BARE-BONES TRAINING; AND ALL BUT MINIMUM SPARE PARTS REQUIRED FOR INITIAL OPERATIONS IN JORDAN.

-- (D) THE FIRST STAGE, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO MAKE MILITARY SENSE AND PROVIDE AN AUSTERE DEFENSE FOR AT LEAST TWO AND PREFERABLY MORE OF THE FOUR PRIORITY AREAS WHICH JORDANIANS HAVE INDICATED THEY WISH TO PROTECT.

-- (E) IN ADDITION TO ELIMINATING LOWER-PRIORITY ITEMS AS IN (C) ABOVE, USG WOULD DO ITS BEST TO PARE DOWN TERMINA-

TION AND/OR CONTRACT INTERRUPTION COSTS ALREADY DEVELOPED.

-- (F) PAYMENT FOR A FIRST-STAGE PACKAGE WOULD, AS
ORIGINALLY PROVIDED FOR IN THE TOTAL SYSTEM ENVISAGED BY

THE JORDANIANS, BE SPACED OUT THROUGH MID-1978 FOR HARD-
WARE AND PROBABLY LONGER FOR SOFTWARE COSTS, INCLUDING
TRAINING, CONTRACTOR SERVICES, ETC.

-- (G) BOTH JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WOULD BE CAUTIONED
THAT THE ADDED COSTS FOR THE SECOND-STAGE PACKAGE CAUSED
BY THE STRETCH-OUT WILL INEVITABLY RISE AS TIME PASSES AND
THAT CONSEQUENTLY THE TOTAL COSTS OF THE COMPLETE SYSTEM
DESIRED BY JORDAN WILL GO BEYOND THE APPROXIMATELY DOLS
713 MILLION ROUGH-ORDER-OF-MAGNITUDE FIGURE PREVIOUSLY
MENTIONED.

5. FOR AMBASSADOR PORTER: YOU SHOULD MAKE NO APPROACH TO
SAUDIS UNTIL WE HAVE AMBASSADOR PICKERING'S JUDGMENT ON
THE TACTICAL QUESTION OF WHETHER WE MAKE FIRST APPROACH TO
SAUDIS OR HUSSEIN. IF AND WHEN WE AUTHORIZE AN APPROACH
TO SAUDIS, OUR THINKING IS THAT YOU SHOULD GO TO PRINCE
FAHD TO DESCRIBE THE SITUATION AS WE NOW SEE IT AND OUR
PROPOSED SOLUTIONS. DRAWING ON BASIC ELEMENTS OF OUR
POSITION OUTLINED ABOVE, YOUR AIM SHOULD BE TWO-FOLD: (A)
TO OBTAIN SAUDI AGREEMENT TO A TWO-STAGE CONCEPT, WITH THE
SAUDIS FUNDING A FIRST-STAGE PACKAGE GREATER THAN DOLS 300
MILLION, PREFERABLY IN THE DOLS 500 MILLION RANGE; (B) TO
SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 065708

OBTAIN SAUDI COMMITMENT TO A COMMON U.S.-SAUDI POSITION
WHICH WE COULD PRESENT TO HUSSEIN ON HIS VISIT TO WASHING-
TON MARCH 30-31 AS A COMPROMISE OPTION THAT WOULD SATISFY
MANY IF NOT MOST OF HIS NEEDS IN THE FIRST STAGE. (WITH
FIRM SAUDI BACKING, OUR CHANCES OF PERSUADING HUSSEIN TO
ACCEPT A REASONABLE COMPROMISE AND TO IGNORE THE SOVIET
ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED.)

6. YOU MAY WISH TO ADJUST YOUR PRESENTATION TO ACCORD TO
WHAT YOU JUDGE WILL BE MOST EFFECTIVE, BUT OUR VIEW IS
THAT YOU SHOULD FIRST EXPLAIN THAT HUSSEIN HAS ATTACHED
GREAT IMPORTANCE TO A FORCE OF 14 HAWK BATTERIES, AND IT
IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER HE WOULD ACCEPT ANY SMALLER FORCE.
WE HAVE, HOWEVER, EXAMINED SMALLER OPTIONS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE
PURPOSES. WE ARE PARTICULARLY CONVINCED THAT HE
COULD NOT ACCEPT WHAT COULD BE PURCHASED FOR DOLS 300
MILLION. THIS WOULD PAY FOR ONLY SIX HAWK BATTERIES/36
VULCANS, (COSTING A BARE-BONES MINIMUM OF DOLS 271.5 MIL-
LION). AT BEST IT WOULD PROVIDE AUSTERE PROTECTION FOR
THE AMMAN-ZARQA AREA ONLY, ONE OF HIS FOUR PRIORITY AREAS
TO PROTECT.

7. AT THIS POINT YOU MIGHT THEN DESCRIBE THE TWO-STAGE CONCEPT (PARA 4) AND THE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS WE HAVE DEVELOPED, IN WHICH WE PARED TO THE BONE ALL MARGINAL AND LESS ESSENTIAL SOFTWARE (FIGURES IN PARENTHESES INCORPORATE A 15 PERCENT CONTINGENCY FIGURE FOR POSSIBLE INFLATION AND OTHER UNFORESEEN NEEDS):

OPTION MIX DOL(MILLIONS) (ESTIMATED)

1	14 HAWK BATT/100 VULCANS	520.5 (598.6)
2	14 HAWK BATT/36 VULCANS	456.5 (525)
3	14 HAWK BATT/NO VULCANS	420.5 (483.6)
4	9 HAWK BATT/36 VULCANS	348.5 (400.8)
5	8 HAWK BATT/36 VULCANS	329.5 (378.9)
6	6 HAWK BATT/36 VULCANS	271.5 (312.2)

8. THE FOUR AREAS JORDAN WANTS TO PROTECT ARE:

(A) AMMAN-ZARQA, MAJOR POPULATION, STRATEGIC INDUSTRIAL, MILITARY COMPLEX

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 065708

(B) AZRAQ. FIGHTER BASE, LONG-RANGE RADAR, AND PLANNED CENTRAL COMMAND-CONTROL FACILITY.

(C) PRINCE HASSAN AFB (FIGHTER BASE)

(D) QATRANA. LONG-RANGE RADAR.

9. PROS AND CONS IN LIGHT OF POL/MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS:

OPTION 1 -- SATISFIES HUSSEIN'S ATTACHMENT TO 14/100 FIGURE COMBINATION AND COVERS THE FOUR PRIORITY AREAS. ALL OTHER OPTIONS FALL SHORT OF WHAT HUSSEIN REGARDS AS MINIMUM AIR DEFENSE.

OPTION 2 -- THE FEWER VULCANS UNDERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HAWKS. (SEE OPTION 3 BELOW.)

OPTION 3 -- ALTHOUGH THE 14 HAWK BATTERIES MAY SOUND GOOD AND HELP HUSSEIN'S DOMESTIC NEEDS, THE CONCEPT OF DEPLOYING THEM ALONE IS MILITARILY UNSOUND. THE VULCANS ARE NEEDED TO CHANNEL HOSTILE AIRCRAFT INTO "ENVELOPES" OFFERING MAXIMUM FIRING ADVANTAGES TO HAWKS. SINCE HAWKS WILL BE IN HARDENED, NON-MOBILE SITES, IT IS ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE MOBILITY OFFERED BY VULCAN GUNS SO AS TO ADJUST TO TACTICAL SITUATIONS. BIN SHAKIR AND ABOUD TELL US JORDAN DOES NOT HAVE ANTI-AIRCRAFT EQUIPMENT TO SUBSTITUTE FOR VULCANS.

OPTION 4 -- CONSTITUTES A REASONABLY GOOD MIX OF HAWKS AND VULCANS, ALLOWING SIX BATTERIES TO DEFEND THE AMMAN-ZARQA COMPLEX, WITH THREE OTHER BATTERIES DEPLOYED AT

AZRAQ. (ALTERNATIVELY, THREE BATTERIES COULD BE USED TO DEFEND AZRAQ, WITH THREE AT QATRANA TO PROTECT LONG-RANGE RADAR THERE, AND THREE BATTERIES COULD PROTECT OTHER MAJOR FIGHTER BASE AT PRINCE HASSAN AFB). IN ANY ARRANGEMENT, HOWEVER, ONE OF THE FOUR TARGET AREAS WOULD BE LEFT UNPROTECTED; HOWEVER, THE AZRAQ AND QATRANA INSTALLATIONS WILL NOT BE COMPLETED FOR AT LEAST TWO MORE YEARS AND ONE AREA COULD BE LEFT FOR THE SECOND STAGE. A MAJOR PROBLEM WITH THIS AND FOLLOWING OPTIONS IS THAT THEY DO NOT MEET HUSSEIN'S EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR 14 HAWK BATTERIES.

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 065708

OPTION 5 - USING A DEPLOYMENT PATTERN SIMILAR TO THE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENT IN OPTION 4, TWO BATTERIES COULD BE USED AS A MINIMUM DEFENSE OF PRINCE HASSAN AIR FORCE BASE SINCE JORDAN'S CENTRAL COMMAND AND CONTROL FACILITY WOULD NOT BE LOCATED THERE.

OPTION 6 - AS NOTED PARA 6 ABOVE, THIS WOULD UNQUESTIONABLY BE UNACCEPTABLE TO HUSSEIN. IT COULD, HOWEVER, PROTECT EITHER THE MAJOR POPULATION AND STRATEGIC AREA OF AMMAN/ZARQA, OR, ALTERNATIVELY, TWO OF THE OTHER PRIORITY AREAS MENTIONED ABOVE.

10. FYI: 36 VULCAN FIGURE IS ACTUALLY SOMEWHAT ARBITRARY, ALTHOUGH FAIRLY SOUND MILITARILY, FOR THE SMALLER OPTIONS 4-5-6. 36 ARE IN STOCK; ADDITIONAL VULCANS WOULD HAVE TO COME FROM FUTURE PRODUCTION. END FYI.

11. FYI: OPTION 4 (FOR 9 BATTERIES/36 VULCANS) IS PROBABLY THE MINIMUM WE COULD REALISTICALLY EXPECT HUSSEIN TO ACCEPT AS FIRST STAGE OF A TWO-STAGE APPROACH, THOUGH AGAIN WE RECOGNIZE THAT ANYTHING LESS THAN 14 BATTERIES WILL GIVE HIM TROUBLE. IT FOLLOWS THAT YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE SAUDIS WILL SEE FOR THEMSELVES THAT OPTION 4 CLEARLY IS THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM, NEEDING AN ADDITIONAL DOLS 100 MILLION TO COVER UNFORESEEN CONTINGENCIES AND THAT EVEN THIS FALLS BELOW WHAT HUSSEIN HAS SO FAR INSISTED ON.

FOR AMBASSADOR PICKERING:

12. IN EXAMINING WHETHER WE SHOULD GO FIRST TO THE SAUDIS OR TO HUSSEIN WE NEED TO WEIGH FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

A. THE JORDANIANS HAVE ASKED US TO INTERCEDE WITH THE SAUDIS, AND AMBASSADOR PORTER HAS ALREADY HAD TWO CONVERSATIONS IN WHICH SAUDIS INDICATED THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY ALTERNATIVES WE COULD SUGGEST TO THE DOLS 713 MILLION PACKAGE. THEY ARE MEANWHILE HOLDING OFF GOING TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR A DECISION WHICH, AT THIS STAGE, WOULD LOCK TEM INTO A DOLS 300 MILLION CEILING. AMB PORTER'S APPROACH WOULD BE DESIGNED TO SHOW THE SAUDIS HOW LITTLE HUSSEIN WOULD GET FOR DOLS 300 MILLION AND TO

SECRET

PAGE 07 STATE 065708

MAKE CLEAR THAT THIS WOULD BE A NON-STARTER, GIVEN HUSSEIN-COMMITMENT TO A COMPREHENSIVE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. HE WOULD

IN THE FIRST INSTANCE TRY TO PERSUADE THE SAUDIS TO FINANCE A FULL BUT AUSTERE 14 HAWK BATTERY/100 VULCAN SYSTEM, WHICH WOULD REDUCE THE TOTAL PRICE TO DOLS 520-598 MILLION. HE WOULD AT THE SAME TIME DESCRIBE ALTERNATIVE PACKAGES AT LOWER COSTS, WHILE POINTING OUT THEIR DRAWBACKS FROM A MILITARY POINT OF VIEW. THE ARGUMENT FOR GOING FIRST TO THE SAUDIS IS THAT, IF WE COULD AGREE ON A U.S.-SAUDI COMMON POSITION FOR A COMPROMISE SOLUTION, SATISFYING AS MANY OF HUSSEIN'S CONCERNS AS POSSIBLE, THIS COULD THEN BE PRESENTED TO HUSSEIN ON HIS U.S. VISIT AS THE RESULT OF OUR EFFORTS WITH THE SAUDIS WHICH WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO REJECT THAN IF WE WENT TO HIM IN THE FIRST INSTANCE.

B. IF WE WERE TO GO FIRST TO HUSSEIN WITHOUT A FIRM SAUDI COMMITMENT TO A PACKAGE WHICH, WHILE LESS THAN THE FULL DOLS 713 MILLION, WE COULD PRESENT TO HUSSEIN AS REASONABLY RESPONSIVE TO HIS ESSENTIAL NEEDS, THERE IS A HIGH RISK THAT HE WOULD SIMPLY INSIST ON THE FULL DOLS 713 MILLION PACKAGE. IF WE CAN GET THE SAUDIS TO AGREE TO GO ABOVE THE DOLS 300 MILLION CEILING, WHICH UP TO NOW THEY HAVE SAID IS THEIR MAXIMUM, WE COULD PRESENT THIS TO HUSSEIN AS A POSITIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT BY US IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST THAT WE INTERCEDE WITH THE SAUDIS. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, HUSSEIN RETAINS THE RIGHT TO TURN DOWN ANY COMPROMISE, BUT WE THINK IT WOULD BE LESS LIKELY IF PRESENTED TO HIM AS A JOINT U.S.-SAUDI POSITION. THE PRINCIPAL RISK, HOWEVER, IN GOING FIRST TO THE SAUDIS IS THAT, DESPITE OUR EFFORTS TO PUT THIS IN THE BEST LIGHT, HUSSEIN WOULD REACT NEGATIVELY TO OUR NOT HAVING CONSULTED HIM FIRST. THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE COMPOUNDED IF HUSSEIN HEARD FROM THE SAUDIS, AS IS POSSIBLE, THAT WE WERE DISCUSSING SCALED-DOWN ALTERNATIVES WITH THEM.

13. BEARING IN MIND THE HIGH STAKES, PLEASE ADVISE ASAP WHETHER YOU THINK WE COULD GET AWAY WITH GOING TO THE SAUDIS FIRST OR WHETHER YOU THINK WE MUST INSTEAD START WITH HUSSEIN AND OVERCOME HIS OPPOSITION TO OUR DISCUSS-
SECRET

PAGE 08 STATE 065708

SING SCALED-DOWN PACKAGES WITH OTHERS.

14. IF IN YOUR JUDGMENT WE SHOULD APPROACH HUSSEIN FIRST, PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR THOUGHTS ON METHOD AND TIMING OF APPROACH TO ELICIT MOST CONSTRUCTIVE REACTION

FROM HIM. SHOULD WE DO THIS BEFORE OR DURING HUSSEIN'S
WASHINGTON VISIT? SHOULD WE SOLICIT HIS VIEWS, OR CAST
IT IN TERMS OF BRIEFING HIM ON STATUS OF OUR EFFORTS WITH
SAUDIS - E.G., TELLING HIM WE HAVE PREVAILED ON SAUDIS
TO HOLD OFF FORMALIZING DOLS 300 MILLION CEILING, ARE
TRYING TO GET THEM TO GO ABOVE THAT CEILING, ARE

DESCRIBING TO THEM ILLUSTRATIVELY THE KINDS OF PACKAGES
THAT FINANCING AT VARIOUS LEVELS BELOW DOLS 713 MILLION
WOULD BUY TOGETHER WITH THE MILITARY DRAWBACKS, AND
ARE EXAMINING CONCEPT OF A TWO-STAGE APPROACH AS POSSIBLE
WAY OF OVERCOMING SAUDI RESISTANCE?
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